

**CITY MANAGER'S
QUARTERLY UPDATE
JANUARY 1, 2006 – MARCH 31, 2006**

Community Outreach by City Manager

- Met with representatives of Prince George's County to discuss funding for the Prince George's County Community Organizer position.
- Participated in a meeting with Councilmember Doug Barry, Prince George's County Councilmember Will Campos, and Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority Executive Director Erwin Mack to discuss the redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor.
- Met with Jere Stocks of Washington Adventist Hospital to discuss hospital's planned relocation. Also met with Ellen Cahill of Holy Cross Hospital to discuss their concerns about the proposed relocation of WAH.
- Attended meeting of the Circle Woods Community Association.

Administration

- Departmental staff assisted the City Council with the establishment of a process to address issues relating to Washington Adventist Hospital's planned relocation. The City Council passed a resolution establishing a Health Services Impact Committee. A committee to study and review redevelopment issues has also been discussed.
- Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow worked with CASA and others to identify a new day laborer site due to a change in ownership of the prior location. Contract negotiations and relocation of the trailer had to be accomplished in a very short period of time.
- Departmental staff worked with the City Attorney's Office to identify a consulting firm to provide technical advice and assistance to the City relative to the proposed development at the Takoma Metro site. Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow worked with consultant, shared information with WMATA, and attended the planning workshop sponsored by WMATA.
- Considerable staff resources were devoted to preparing materials for the City Council's discussion of policy priorities and associated work plans for calendar years 2006 and 2007. The Council met in January and March to discuss this matter. The following policy areas were agreed upon as priorities: the preservation of affordable housing, completion of the Community Center project, redevelopment of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor, proactive stance towards development in the City, and obtaining a fairer tax duplication payment.
- Community and Government Liaison Suzanne Ludlow promoted the City's positions on many issues being considered in the State Legislature, including condominium conversion, municipal ownership of streetlights, "mansionization", electrical aggregation, and mercury in vehicles. Ms. Ludlow also spent considerable time preparing materials relative to the City's bond bill request for the Community Center project; these efforts were successful, resulting in a grant of \$360,000.
- A major focus of departmental staff was the development of the City Manager's proposed budget for FY07. Considerable staff resources were devoted to this effort.

- The selection for the position of the Director of Public Works was concluded. Daryl Braithwaite, who previously served as Deputy Director, was appointed to the position.

Communications

- Events covered by City TV including the following: the Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration, the Y.E.S. League's Junior Varsity Championship game, and the Jazz Band Brawl.
- Snapshots episodes included the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Authority's meeting regarding the new Transit Center and the Poetry Reading series sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Commission.
- The City's new website, TakomaParkMD.gov, launched in January.
- The Granicus web streaming and archiving application went live on March 6th as a collaborative effort between the Communications Office, the City Clerk's Office, and Information Systems. All City Council meetings, as well as Snapshots episodes, are available.

Housing and Community Development

- Departmental staff continued its support of the efforts of Old Takoma businesses and property owners. Efforts included assisting the Design Committee and the Economic Restructuring Committees in the development of guidelines for the facade improvement grants, organization of a spring clean up day, and analysis of completed business surveys.
- Text and supporting materials were developed for the City's website, providing expanded information on a variety of topics affecting local tenants and landlords. The new material is expected to go on line later this spring.
- Staff continued work on the recodification of the rent stabilization ordinance, preparing informational materials and background data for presentation before the Council at five work sessions. Efforts included outreach to local tenants, landlords, and the general community to advise them of the ongoing discussion and to encourage participation in the process, including the distribution of notices regarding the March public hearing.
- The Code Enforcement Division, working in partnership with the Finance Department, facilitated the billing of the 2006 rental housing license fees. The licenses application form was updated and landlords were provided information on licensing requirements. Three landlord certification seminars were conducted.
- The annual rent increase allowance was calculated. Tenants and landlords were notified of the new allowance effective July 1st and provided an opportunity to comment. Municipal infractions were issued to landlords failing to submit their annual rent reports in a timely manner. Rent report data was monitored on random basis with tenants contacted to confirm the accuracy of the information provided by the landlords.
- The tenants of six rental properties placed on the market were notified of their rights to pursue the purchase of their rental facility and offered assistance in forming a tenant association. Work with

the tenants at four rental facilities continued under the auspices of the Capacity Building Initiative. A new tenant organization was formed.

- Staff provided support to the Community and Government Liaison in the development of legislation designed to address the City Council's concerns regarding the conversion of rental housing to condominiums. Assistance was provided to tenants facing possible displacement as the result of their landlord's decision to convert their rental facility to condominiums.
- Planning staff monitored the status of several large projects, including streetscape improvements proposed by SHA for University Boulevard and New Hampshire, the redevelopment of 7001 Carroll Avenue in Old Town, and the East Hampshire Center in the Pinecrest neighborhood. Work included preparation of analysis of the individual projects, attendance at various community meetings, and participation in the development review process at Park and Planning and Council presentations.
- During the quarter, staff assisted the Arts and Humanities Commission in the coordination of four art exhibits, two poetry readings, and two community discussions of the Cultural Plan adopted by the Council in 2005. Support was provided to Fannie Mae for the display of a fifth exhibit, sponsored by the City Council; the exhibit was displayed in February.
- Planning staff conducted two meetings with the businesses located in the Long Branch/Takoma Park Enterprise Zone. Information was provided on available financial incentives, a proposed crime watch program, and the benefits of forming a business association. Additional meetings are planned.

Library

- The new Thursday morning Spanish language circle time ("la hora de juego") continues to be a welcome addition to the Library's programming. The program has attracted a loyal and growing following of parents and children and has a weekly attendance of approximately 40 persons. Departmental staff, in conjunction with storyteller Lupe Marks, is working to broaden participation to include more members of the Spanish speaking community. The Friends of the Library underwrites the event with funds provided by the Friends of Mike Morrissey.
- The Friends of the Library held their annual meeting at the Library on March 28th. The following individuals were elected as new Board officers: Rebekah Zanditon, President; Sonja Kueppers, Vice President; and Sara Criscitelli and Laura Barclay, Members at Large. The following individuals were recognized for their past service and contributions to the Board: Jim Sebastian, Claudine Schweber, Ahmed Martinez, and Mary Drake.
- The Library received a "facelift" during the quarter. Improvements were made to the exterior drainage system, and a new roof and vinyl soffit were installed.
- The Friends of the Library have established a bi-monthly reading club, with discussions facilitated by educator/poet/publisher Merrill Leffler. The organization is purchasing multiple copies of the selections for readers, including *The Tortilla Curtain*, *Housekeeping*, and *The Known World*.
- During the quarter, both public access rooms in the Computer Learning Center became open for customer use. The Center is open from 12:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Additional operating hours are 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Friday and 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. Upon completion of Phase Two of the Community Center, the Center will be open on

Sunday as well. Phil Shapiro, Shuko Tamao, and Wiraphon Trepinski staff the Computer Learning Center.

Police

- Despite reduced staffing, the quarter was a busy one for the Community Oriented Policing (COP) Team. Activities included the following:
 - Conducted home security surveys
 - Attended a variety of community and resident meetings, including those related to the formation of a New Hampshire Corridor business association
 - Participated in an elementary school field trip
 - Attended meetings of the Montgomery County Highway Safety Task Force, as well as meetings concerning automated speed enforcement
- Calls for service in the first quarter of 2006 were 3707, including 716 traffic stops. For comparative purposes, there were 4,172 calls, including 1140 traffic stops for the same period in 2005. Due to reduced staffing levels, there were fewer traffic stops in the current year. Four new officers will become trained in speed measurement in the near future.
- In February, 16 individuals participated in a police entrance exam; of these, eight advanced to the background phase. During the quarter, two entrance exams were given for the position of dispatcher; 29 applicants took the exam, with ten moving into the background phase.
- An additional group of officers took the Montgomery County Police counter-terrorism training course, leaving all but a few officers not trained in this topic. Five officers were also trained in Project Safe Neighborhoods Street Firearms Enforcement.
- Lieutenant Richard Cipperly and Victim/Witness Assistant Diana Dean joined the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. This interdisciplinary unit was established under a new State law to appraise critically domestic violence fatalities and near-fatal assaults, to review adjudicated events and make recommendations for policy improvements that might prevent similar future tragedies.
- Captain Coursey joined the Montgomery County Law Enforcement Coordination Group, which has been formed by the County's Department of Homeland Security. The group, which will meet on a bi-monthly basis, will coordinate law enforcement response and activities regarding emergency response and preparedness. The first major issue of concern is to work towards a better understanding of what may be required of law enforcement in a serious pandemic flu outbreak situation.
- Staff was trained in the Takoma Park Alert system. During the quarter, the system was utilized to inform the public about a series of armed robberies.
- Mary Kendall was appointed Program Director of the International Corridor CSAFE Initiative. She replaced John Brill, who held the position for four years.

- In March, Chief Cindy Creamer and other departmental staff members attended the Commission on Law Enforcement Accreditation (CALEA) conference in Jacksonville, Florida. The Commission formally granted accredited status to the Takoma Park Police Department.
- Criminal investigators continue to be regular participants in inter-jurisdictional meetings on robbery and burglary in the metropolitan area, as well as on specific cases. Events that required significant staff resources during the quarter included the following: a man found deceased in a business stairwell (cause of death deemed hypothermia complicated by alcohol); an acquaintance rape (eventually deemed assault); and a drug investigation on Cole Avenue (nine arrests and condemnation of the house). The burglary/homicide on Maple Avenue, for which patrol made an immediate arrest, involved significant evidence processing and other follow-up. Two arrests were made in a January armed robbery in the V3 beat, with both suspects pleading guilty. A series of similar robberies and auto thefts involving numerous young male suspects in and around that area and adjacent jurisdictions continues; the on-going investigation involves at least three other police agencies. Investigation of a serious assault in late March is on going; one arrest has been made to date.

Public Works

- A number of stormwater management projects were completed. A drainage improvement project on Sycamore Avenue entailed raising the grade of the sidewalk in the 7000 block and replacing the top and throat of the inlet to improve the flow of water. A project in the 1000 block of Elm Avenue altered the grade of the curb line and installed a slight swale across Elm Avenue to improve the flow of water to the inlet on Linden Circle. Both projects eliminated long-standing water problems.
- The City executed a contract with Environmental Design, Inc. to develop a rain garden proposal for Cleveland Avenue. Landscape architects from the firm have met with the neighborhood. The design is nearing the final phase. Installation of rain gardens and additional stormwater drainage improvements are planned in FY07. Street resurfacing will occur after completion of the project.
- Friends of Sligo Creek were successful in receiving a grant to do a second rain garden in Forest Park.
- Park Avenue, Dogwood Avenue, and Holton Lane were resurfaced during the quarter.
- Crackfilling was completed on Trescott Avenue and Jackson Avenue, Glenside Avenue to Hammond Avenue.

Recreation

- This marked the first complete quarter that Phase One of the Community Center was operational. Staff developed policies and schedules to accommodate the various users. Program offerings increased substantially.
- Departmental staff received training on several new systems for the building, including scheduling software, finance, and security camera operations.

- Staff has processed several requests for partnerships with various organizations. These organizations included La Leche League, Takoma Parenting, Jewish Community Centers, and Toastmasters.
- The KidzCity program at the New Hampshire Community Center has grown to serve 30 children after school. This started with a CSafe grant two years ago and is now completely funded with City operating monies.